

DHHL stands by its record

By Micah A. Kane

Editor's note: Micah Kane is chairman of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and director of the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The views expressed in this community forum are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

On Sept. 2 and 3, *The Honolulu Advertiser* ran two front-page stories critical of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). The articles, written by Jim Dooley, contain several inaccurate and misleading statements.

Mr. Dooley's assertion that DHHL contracts were awarded due to political reasons is false. We have awarded contracts based on expected performance, and that is made clear to all we do business with.

Mr. Dooley's articles inferred that the selection committee members were not qualified. This is also false. They are qualified, and just as we expect performance from the businesses with whom we contract, we expect performance from the people we hire.

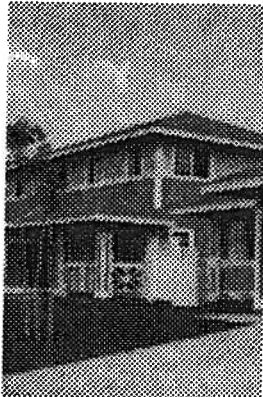
The allegations of procurement violations were brought by Mr. Dooley after he proposed an incorrect hypothetical scenario to the State Procurement Officer, Aaron Fujioka. After we provided Mr. Fujioka with corrected and additional information, he stated the hypothetical situation he responded to did not match the scenario presented in Mr. Dooley's article.

In addition, Mr. Fujioka stated, "Based on the information reviewed, SPO (State Procurement Office) concurs with and confirms that (the contractor) selection complies with the procurement code."

Mr. Fujioka also, at our request, suggested additional procedures we can incorporate

into our procurement process to further alleviate the perception of impropriety. The additional procedures suggested by Mr. Fujioka have already been incorporated in our process.

Further, the article refers to the term "non-bid" without clarifying that non-bid does not mean non-competitive. As required by the state procurement code, under a non-bid award, at least three companies are selected from a pre-qualified list and then competitively compared to pro-



DHHL's 326-unit Koupe 'o project in Kapolei is nearly half-filled with native Hawaiian families. - Photo: Courtesy of DHHL

duce a most-qualified selection with the supporting justification. This procedure was followed by DHHL.

The articles attempt to isolate the historical challenges of a specific project, Kēōkea-Waiohuli, as though they are still common practice for the department. Previous administrations were unable to find a way to feasibly proceed with the Kēōkea agricultural subdivision promised to beneficiaries more than 20 years ago. That changed with a stable source of funding to DHHL by the state Legislature and a fresh perspective brought by the Lingle-Aiona administration and Community Planning & Engineering, Inc.

The Kēōkea-Waiohuli project is expensive in large part

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Top Doc

A consultation with Physician of the Year Kalani Brady

By Derek Ferrar
Public Information Specialist

On Sept. 15, the Hawai'i Medical Association presented Native Hawaiian doctor S. Kalani Brady with its Physician of the Year Award for 2007. The annual honor is given to Hawai'i doctors who are engaged in exemplary service to the community.

An internist best known for his weekly TV appearances on the "Ask a Doctor" segment of KHON's morning news program, Brady is also dedicated to an amazing array of community work, particularly in the field of Hawaiian health care. Among a very long list of activities, he is an associate professor of Native Hawaiian health at the UH medical school, makes weekly visits to care for Hansen's disease patients at Kalaupapa, edits the *Hawai'i Medical Journal* and recently served as president of the Hawaiian physician's association, 'Ahaui o nā Kauka. A gifted singer, he is also a regular at concert and musical theater performances on Hawai'i stages.

A few days after he received the award, KWO managed to squeeze a few moments into Dr. Brady's overflowing appointment book for a consultation:

What does receiving this award mean to you?

Well, you know, physicians in general do a great deal of service, usually patient by patient. But many of them do a lot of community service as well, so, quite frankly, a lot of my colleagues are as deserving of this award as I am. I just tend to be a bit more public because of the TV stuff.

What inspired you to become a doctor?

You know, from the Hawaiian perspective, practitioners of

lā'au lapa'au (traditional herbal healing) were chosen by their teachers as children, and their training began when they were quite young. I don't mean it to elevate myself to that kind of level, but my parents remember me being interested in becoming a doctor from around age four or five, and I think I really did feel very early on that it was the calling to which I had been summoned. I first started doing medical research when I was a sophomore in high school, and worked at it every summer thereafter.

What kind of topics do you teach in the UH medical school's Department of Native Hawaiian Health?

A lot of cultural sensitivity and cultural competence. I teach a class to the first-year medical students on community health, where they get to hear speakers like Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, who actually co-teaches with me, talk about why Native Hawaiians' health statistics may be worse in a lot of ways, and how we can address that - not just in the eyes of western medicine, but in a larger cultural context. We've had a lā'au lapa'au practitioner come and talk, and we actually work in the māla, the garden, that we have at the medical school, where we're growing healing plants. So they actually get their hands into the soil and start working on the lā'au.

Also, it would do our department a great service if we can mention that we are eager for new patients in our Lau Ola clinic at Kuakini, where we see patients four days a week, regardless of insurance. Our number is 294-1178.

What are some of the things you think can be done to improve health care for Native Hawaiians?

I think one place where we



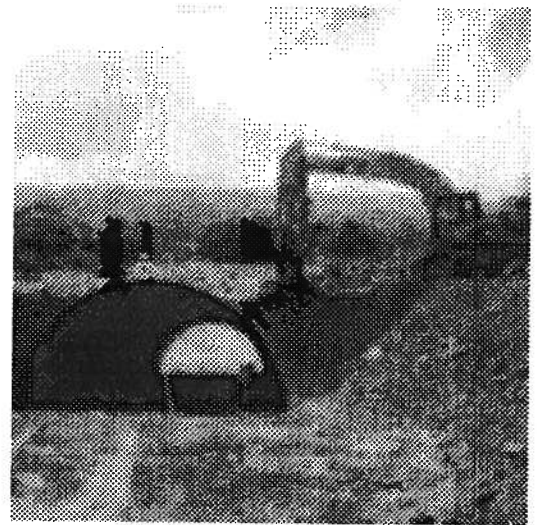
Among his many other activities, Kalani Brady, shown here on Kaho'olawe, teaches at UH's Department of Native Hawaiian Health and treats patients at Kalaupapa. -Photo: Derek Ferrar

can continue to put our energy in using the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems that are already in place for increased public education and awareness, along with community health centers that are culturally appropriate for the areas in which they are located.

A lot of cultural competence in dealing with Native Hawaiian health lies in really reaching Hawaiians in places where we feel comfortable, which a lot of times is in our own community. It doesn't help to have brochures and other things that have been generated in Washington, D.C. or by a think tank in Boston; it helps to have Hawaiians developing materials and doing field testing to find out what's appropriate for Hawaiians.

It's often said that Native Hawaiians are under-represented in the medical field. What might you say to young Hawaiians to encourage them to explore health careers?

I mua. They should strive, kūlia, to go in the health professions, because we are definitely under-represented. This is a wonderful profession. It's a challenge, and we do work long hours, but it's a calling that has immense rewards. As a primary care doc, I consider my patients to be my friends, and it's a real honor to be entrusted with their health.



Infrastructure development at Keōkeo-Waiohuli Homestead. - Photo: Courtesy of DHHL

DHHL

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because of the location of the land and highlights the high cost of construction work in the state today. Over the past five years the cost of construction has increased dramatically for many developments. *The Honolulu Advertiser* has published numerous articles on the skyrocketing cost of housing, and the lack of infrastructure remains a prohibitive factor in affordable housing today.

While the Maui project has many challenges, it is indicative of the cost impacts of developing lands that do not have readily available infrastructure nearby. It is also indicative of DHHL's philosophy to address longstanding issues and not leave them for future administrations.

Mr. Dooley's articles do not always provide an accurate picture, and it is unfortunate that instead of building homes for native Hawaiians, we are defending a process we followed correctly.

We are proud of the performance of the department, and in the last four-and-a-half years, we have issued more than 2,000 leases. Today, DHHL is one of

the largest, if not the largest, residential developer in the state of Hawai'i. We have projects on every island and homes are being finished every day.

For example, DHHL's 326-unit Kaue'a project is nearly half filled with native Hawaiian families, and the site work for 403 lots in East Kapolei 1 has begun. Phase 1 of the 181-unit subdivision in Anahola, Kaua'i will go into house construction early next year.

On Maui alone we have seen tremendous progress. Over the past four years, construction commenced that will result in more than 500 native Hawaiian families getting on their land. Of those 500 families, more than 200 are already in their homes.

Today, we anticipate awarding 1,000 leases a year statewide. Due to the hard work and dedication of staff, beneficiaries and contractors who help us perform our work, we have been able to deliver homes to native Hawaiians who have been waiting for a long time.

Firms such as Community Planning & Engineering, Inc. assist us in meeting our longstanding obligations to provide land and affordable housing for those of Hawaiian ancestry. We stand by our record.